DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 104 751 30 008 219

AUTHOR Lam, Yee Lay Jack
TITLE School Characteristics, Student Mobility Rates and Outlets in Hong Kong.
PUB DATE [74]
NOTE 18p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Comparative Education; Cross Cultural Studies; *Dropout Research; *Educational Finance; *Educational Research; English (Second Language); Government Role; Private Schools; School Funds; *School Holding Power; School Surveys; Secondary Education; Student Characteristics; *Student Mobility; Student School Relationship
IDENTIFIERS Hong Kong

ABSTRACT

This survey compares mobility and outlets of secondary students in Hong Kong by the type of schools within the educational system. Student mobility is defined as transfer to other local schools, transfer to overseas schools, and dropping out. The six types of schools within the system include three Anglo-Chinese instructed schools -- government, partially aided government, and private -- and three Chinese instructed schools -- also government, partially aided government, and private. As a rule, fully funded government schools have the greatest operational budgets, best facilities, and most competent teaching staffs while private schools have the worst. Results indicate that for 39 secondary schools in the sample, student transfer and dropout rate was lower in government schools which used English as the medium for instruction and correspondingly higher in private Chinese schools. It is postulated that schools using English have greater social prestige which retards student mobility. Students in the better government schools had a greater chance to transfer to other Hong Kong schools while those students eliminated from less prestigious schools either studied abroad or joined the working ranks. It is recommended that the government devise a method for bringing about equity of subsidies to schools to reduce student overseas transfer and dropout rate from the less well financed schools. (DE)

ED104751

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS, STUDENT MOBILITY RATES AND OUTLETS IN HONG KONG

By

Dr. Yee Lay Jack Lam
Assistant Professor
Faculty of Education
Brandon University

SP008 219

Massive research has been conducted on the premise that school characteristics affect students' performance (Mahan & Mahan, 1971; Lucic, 1973; Featherstone, 1974). There is an equally explicit and implicit conviction shared by many educationists that the amount of financial resources available to schools will determine the characteristics of these schools and the eventual quality of students' schoolings. Indeed, ranges and scopes of programs, degree of adequacy of physical and instructional facilities, kinds of resource personnel available are, to a considerable extent, affected by the size of operational budgets of the school systems. Guthrie and his associates (1970) and Thomas (1968) asserted that disparity of money allocation to schools reinforced "inequality of knowledge, opportunities, income and social standing" already conspicuous in the present system.

Pursuing this trend of observation, the present survey was primarily concerned with mapping, from two macro-factors: financial sponsorship and medium of instruction, student mobility rates and their outlets. While analysis of macro-factors such as intra-school structure, socio-psychological and demographic characteristics of individual students would allow a researcher to pinpoint basic factors for student movements, the selection of the two macro-factors, by far, offer the most convenient and

relevant indicator of inter-school differences in a social setting such as that of Hong Kong where the study was conducted. Together these two factors constituted the basic grids by which schools in Hong Kong and a number of countries in the British Commonwealth are categorized. Findings from the present survey would offer a discernable basis for cross-cultural comparison.

With reference to financial sponsorship, schools in Hong Kong fell into three categories: those fully financed by the government (government schools), those partly financed by government and partly by church groups or charity organizations (aided schools), and those run entirely by individuals or groups (private schools). As a rule, government schools have the greatest operational budgets and as such, have the best facilities and competent teaching staff. Private schools, having budgets derived mostly, if not entirely, from students' tuition fees, are much inferior to government schools in many respects. Aided schools fall somewhere in between these two conditions.

With reference to medium of instruction, schools in Hong Kong as in the case of many British Commonwealth countries, could be classified into two types: 1) those adopting English as the medium of instruction (Anglo-Chinese Schools) and 2) those using native language in instruction (Chinese schools).

TABLE I

SUMMARY TABLE

OF THE SAMPLED SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS WHO TRANSFERRED

TYPES OF SCHOOL		No. of Schools	Total No. of Students	Students Who Transferred		Male Students Who Transferred		Female Students Who Transferred	
Medium of Instruction	Sponsorship			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
ANGLO-CHINESE	Government	5	3396	40	1.2	24	60	16	40
	Aided	17	14916	573	3.84	316	55	257	45
	Private	7	5327	304	5.7	206	67.8	98	32.2
CHINESE	Government	3	1365	27	2	15	55.6	12	44.4
	Aided	4	2734	235	8.6	118	50.2	117	49.8
	Private	3	3765	283	7.52	157	55.5	126	44.5
	TOTAL	39	31503	1462	4.64	836	57.2	626	42.8

50000

The combination of these two factors resulted in six types: Anglo-Chinese Government, Anglo-Chinese aided, Anglo-Chinese private, Chinese Government, Chinese aided, and Chinese private schools, which represented all the major kinds of academic secondary schools in the colony. Given the observed diversity of school characteristics as reflected by these two selected factors, with no laws as those of North America to enforece attendance of schools by geographical proximity, four questions emerged that governed the present investigations:

(1) Were there significant differences among various types of schools with respect to students' mobility rate?

(2) Were there inter-class differences in student mobility in the various types of schools?

(3) Where did students who left the schools they last attended to go?

(4) Was the mobility rates related to that of drop-outs?

In the present context, mobility of students is perceived to embrace such phenomena as transfer to other local schools, transfer schools overseas, and dropouts.

DATA COLLECTION AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Altogether, 39 secondary schools with a gross student population of 31,503 were involved in the survey (Table 1). Information regarding student mobility rate was provided by principals and teachers concerned. The various outlets of students were given by parents whenever they could be located. Data collection, starting

in January, 1973, was completed in March of the same year.

Test of significance for proportion (z) and correlational analysis were the major statistical techniques employed in the data analysis.

Results

By z-comparisons it was found that among Anglo-Chinese secondary schools, student mobility rates of the Government schools was significantly smaller than that of either aided ($z=8.023$; $P > .01$) or private schools ($z=10.71$; $P > .01$) and that of aided schools in turn, was smaller than the private schools ($z=5.91$; $P > .01$). Among Chinese secondary schools, the same pattern occurred except that aided schools were not significantly different from private schools. Comparing schools by medium of instruction, it was found that Chinese aided and private schools had greater student transfer rate than their counterparts in the Anglo-Chinese stream ($zs = 11.2$ and 3.5 respectively). In terms of student mobility rate, Chinese secondary schools operated by Government were not significantly different from Government Anglo-Chinese schools.

It would seem from the analysis that schools which were better financed and which used English as the medium of instruction had a more stable student population. While the relationship between adequacy of funds and stability of student population could be readily understood in terms of physical facilities, human and material resources available to students, that medium of instruction should affect mobility of students, remains difficult to comprehend. I might not be far-fetched to postulate that perhaps in colonial social settings, with English as the official language, schools adopting that language medium for

instructional purpose carry greater social prestige than those using the Native language. It is also likely that graduates from those English speaking schools find it easier to get good jobs.

TABLE II

Z-COMPARISONS OF STUDENT MOBILITY RATES BY CLASS LEVELS

	FI	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
FI							
F2	2.75*						
F3	5.13*	2.48+					
F4	5.31	2.92*	0.65				
F5	4.21*	2.59*	1.15	0.72			
F6	4.31*	2.88*	1.57	1.17	0.44		
F7	3.57*	2.91*	0.77	2.29+	2.05	1.88	

* sig. at 0.01 level

+ sig. at 0.05 level

To the question: "at what class level is such mobility rate most conspicuous?" analysis of data (Table II) revealed that students in Forms 1, 2, 3 and 6 are far more mobile than those in Forms 4, 5 and 7. Two possible reasons can be postulated. First, Forms 4, 5 and 7 are the periods when curriculum is highly geared to public

examinations. And as each school tends to cover curriculum in different paces and with different orders of procedure, transfer at these levels would almost be impossible. Second, these are the levels where internal screenings through examinations are comparatively few in numbers and thus is ensured some degree of stability of student population.

TABLE III

Z-COMPARISONS OF MALE AND FEMALE STUDENT MOBILITY RATES IN VARIOUS CLASS LEVELS

Class Levels	Male students Who Transferred No.	%	Female students Who Transferred No.	%	Z-Comparison between Male and Female
F1	194	50.53	190	49.47	0.2916
F2	210	56.45	162	43.55	3.5861*
F3	180	55.22	146	44.78	2.695*
F4	153	63.75	87	36.25	6.1521*
F5	50	68.49	23	31.51	4.4836*
F6	42	72.42	16	27.58	4.836*
F7	7	77.77	2	22.23	2.3578+
Total	836	57.18	626	42.82	8.3063*

* sig. at 0.01
\+ sig. at 0.05

Of some degree of interest in examining student mobility by class levels was some detected differences of patterns between

male and female students. In Form 1, there was no difference in mobility by sex, as both groups were high. In Form 2, female students surpassed male students in their mobility (z=3.[illegible], sig. at 0.01). In all other forms (3-7) the situation was the other way around (Table III).

Inference can perhaps be drawn here that there is a great modification of traditional societal prejudice against female children in the family. If they survive the earlier stages of screening in schools (Forms 1 and 2), they are given the opportunities of continuing their secondary schooling. For those who do not make it in earlier forms, however, the pressure on female children to drop out from schools is still strong.

To the next question "Where did those students who transferred go?" Table IV summarizes the answers, some of which bear great social significance. Three major outlets could indeed be identified: There were 46% of students who transferred to other schools; some 18% continued their studies abroad; and about 36% dropped out. Within the last category, about 20% could be located as joining various working ranks. A significant proportion (16%) could not be traced.

TABLE IV

SUMMARY TABLE OF STUDENTS' OUTLETS

TYPES OF SCHOOL		No of	Students	Students		Students		DROPOUTS			
Medium of Instruction	Sponsorship	Schools	Who Leave No.	Who Transfer No.	%	Who Went O.S. No.	%	Working No.	%	Unkown No.	%
ANGLO-	Government	5	40	32	80	3	7.5	3	7.5	2	5
CHINESE	Aided	17	573	316	55	103	18	84	15	70	12
	Private	7	304	10[illegible]	34	60	20	93	31	47	15
	Government	3	27	20	74	2	7.5	3	11	2	7.5
CHINESE	Aided	4	235	87	37	16	7	42	18	90	38
	Private	3	283	117	41	79	28	61	22	26	9
	TOTAL	39	1462	676	46	263	18	286	20	237	16

00012

Comparing these figures by types of schools, it is fairly evident that the majority of the students who left the Anglo-Chinese Government schools were transferred to other schools and this was strikingly different from students of almost all other types. The proportion of students in Anglo-Chinese aided schools continuing their studies in other schools were likewise significantly greater than Anglo-Chinese private schools, Chinese aided and private schools. (Table V) These seem to suggest that students in 'better' schools have a greater chance of transfer to other schools when they were compelled to do so. In light of other evidence from the study, one can further infer that mobility of students is almost exclusively unidirectional so that students eliminated from Goverment schools through examinations are "accommodated" in aided schools and those eliminated in aided schools are "placed" in good private schools and those who failed to achieve to standards in good private schools might be compelled to continue in second-rate private schools and so on.

TABLE V

Z-COMPARISONS OF VARIOUS SCHOOLS IN PROPORTION OF STUDENTS WHO TRANSFERRED TO OTHER SCHOOLS

	ANGLO-CHINESE			CHINESE		
	Govt.	Aided	Private	Govt.	Aided	Private
Aided (A.C.)	3.08*	--				
Private (A.C.)	5.60*	6.00*	--			
Government (C)	0.58	-1.95	-4.13	--		
Aided (C)	5.10*	4.65*	-0.73	3.70*	--	
Private (C)	4.59*	3.88*	-1.76	3.30*	0.93	--

A.C. = Anglo-Chinese Schools
C. = Chinese schools

* sig. at 0.01 level

Regarding the second major outlet--continuing education abroad, it was found that private schools of both Chinese and Anglo-Chinese stream, and Anglo-Chinese aided schools had significantly higher proportion of students who went abroad than Government schools and Chinese aided schools. (Table VI) A possible explanation for this, following the foregoing postulation, is that as transfer to better local schools is unattainable, going abroad is the only way of furthering their studies. This accounts for a significant number of students leaving for South East Asian countries, Europe and North America every year.

TABLE VI

Z-COMPARISONS OF VARIOUS SCHOOLS IN PROPORTION OF STUDENTS WHO WENT OVERSEAS

	ANGLO-CHINESE			CHINESE		
	Govt.	Aided	Private	Govt.	Aided	Private
Aided (A.C.)	-1.86*	--				
Private (A.C.)	-1.93	--.71	--			
Government (C)	0	1.52	1.59	--		
Aided (C)	.12	3.88*	4.33*	0.10	--	
Private (C)	-2.81*	3.33*	-2.31*	-2.32*	-6.06*	--

A.C. = Anglo-Chinese Schools
C. = Chinese Schools

* sig. at 0.01 level

While studying abroad is appealing to a great majority of students, the expenses involved may just be too much for students from

lower-middle and working class families. Thus, it is not surprising to find that the drop-outs were twice as high in proportion to that of going abroad. (Table IX) Of this drop-out figure a significant greater portion came from Anglo-Chinese and Chinese private schools and schools of other types.

Among those who dropped out, one alternative outlet would be to work. Some 20% in total, in fact, were engaged in one kind of work or another. A significantly higher proportion of dropouts from Anglo-Chinese private schools and Chinese private schools were engaged in work than those in Government and aided schools. (Table VII) This tends to confirm the earlier suggestion about unequal opportunities for education among students, the very moment they were admitted to a certain type of school.

TABLE VII

Z-COMPARISON OF VARIOUS SCHOOLS IN PROPORTION OF STUDENTS WHO WORKED

	ANGLO CHINESE			CHINESE		
	Govt.	Aided	Private	Govt.	Aided	Private
Aided (A.C.)	-1.33	--				
Private (A.C.)	-2.89*	-5.66*	--			
Government (C)	-0.49	0.57	2.21+			
Aided (C)	-1.68	-1.13	3.47*	0.92	--	
Private (C)	-2.14*	-0.84	2.50+	1.34	1.15	--

A.C. = Anglo-Chinese Schools
C. = Chinese Schools

* sig. at 0.01 level
+ sig. at 0.05 level

An even more hazardous prospect that awaits students who drop out from schools is unemployment. Similar to all highly industrialized and competitive societies, employment in Hong Kong for those who receive little schooling are quite slim. It would, perhaps, not be too farfetched to postulate that the 16% of students who could not be traced might have ended up in one kind of miserable plight or another. Indeed, these are the cases parents were most reluctant to provide information in the survey. Juvenile delinquency is becoming very serious in recent years and many government papers point to early drop-out as a basic cause of crimes committed by adolescents. Much, indeed, needs to be done in this area before more definite relationship can be ascertained.

To the last question of whether mobility rate was related to drop-outs, findings from this survey indicated that this was so. ($r = .7388$ isg. at 0.01). This is contrary to some studies done in the States (Zeller, 1966). Perhaps, differences between east and west societal milieus must be studied in greater depth before the controversy can be resolved.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In charting mobility and outlets of secondary students in Hong Kong by types of schools using factors that are embedded in many educational systems in the Commonwealth countries, the present

survey detected that students in financially better-off and socially more prestigious schools were the least mobile. Looking more closely at the trend of mobility, it was found that students from better schools had greater chance of transfer to other local schools. For those who were eliminated from the less prestigious schools, the alternatives available were two-fold, depending on their social backgrounds. To a few who came from middle and upper classes to study abroad was the route normally taken. To the majority of students, the foreseeable outlet would be to join the working ranks. In face of scarcity of jobs, a great proportion ended up unemployed and in places unaccounted for. Many attributes, not without some evidence, increasing social unrest and juvenile delinquencies to the unemployed youth. In light of this probability, the government concerned should take a serious look at the funding system, devise some measure of bringing about equity of subsidies to schools or increase the number of vocational schools to house the academically under-achievers. Unless some steps are taken in this direction, the misgiving of the present educational system will continue to create social disorder.

REFERENCES

FEATHERSTONE, J. "Measuring What Schools Achieve" Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 55, 1974, pp. 448-50.

GUTHRIE, J. W., ET AL., "Dollars for Schools: The Reinforcement of Inequality", Educational Administration Quarterly, VI no. 3, 1970, pp. 32-45.

LUCIO, W. H. "Pupil Achievement as an Index of Teacher Performance", Educational Leadership, Vol. 31, 1973, p. 71.

MAHAN, T. W. & MAHAN, A. M. "Impact of Schools on Learning Inner-City Children in Suburban Schools", Journal of School Psychology, Vol. 9, 1971, pp. 1-11.

THOMAS, J. A. School Finance and Educational Opportunity in Michegan. Lansing: State Department of Education, 1968.

ZELLER, R. Learning the Odds of Student Dropouts. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1966, p. 12.